

## PAYSON NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

February 23, 2005      Wednesday      Payson Police Department Conference Room

### Participants

Craig McMullen	AGFD	(928) 468-8217	<a href="mailto:cmcmullen@gf.state.az.us">cmcmullen@gf.state.az.us</a>
Mike Henderson	USFS	(928) 462-4353	
Jared Whitmer	USFS	(928) 462-4321	jwhitmer@fs.fed.us
Mary Gilbert	USFS	(928) 474-7947	mlgilbert@fr.fed.us
Henry Apfel	AGFD	(480) 981-9400	
Bill McEnaney	RMEF	(928) 478-4025	
Lou Maxfield	Bar X Ranch	(928) 462-3744	
James Simmons	AGFD	(928) 479-2984	
Tanner Henry	Sportsman	(928) 474-2630	bighornhunter@cybertrails.com
Pete Hold	MSA	(928) 474-9722	P.J.Shoo.Box@AOL
Jackie Begay <sup>1</sup>	Payson Verde River Ranch	(928) 970-1742	
Len Call	Sportsman	(928) 970-1042	
Jim Freegard	Sportsman	(928) 462-3573	
Chuck Freegard	Sportsman	(928) 462-3573	
Wade Zarlingo	AGFD	(928) 367-4281	
Mary Luculel	AGFD	(928) 367-4281	
Keith Niver		(928) 468-6720	
Warner Thompson	Sportsman	(602) 499-5565	
Charlie Conover	PNRC	(928) 472-9443	conover@future.ave.com
Pat Spurlock	Rancher	(928) 468-7555	
Gary Barcom	MSA	(928) 474-5221	PO Box 2208, Payson, AZ
John Dickson	AGFD	(928) 479-2686	
Allan Hallman	RMEF	(928) 474-9757	
Larry Fait		(602) 616-9700	
Natalie Robb	AGFD	(928) 425-8821	
Tim Holt	AGFD	(928) 474-4191	<a href="mailto:tholt@gf.state.az.us">tholt@gf.state.az.us</a>
Jon Hanna	AGFD	(480) 981-9400	

Craig McMullen opened the meeting at 6:00pm. A sign-in sheet was passed to participants.

Craig asked if there were any corrections for the minutes of the last meeting, held on December 15, 2004. (These minutes were mailed February 2, 2005 to participants.) There were no corrections. The minutes were approved and submitted.

Craig asked for nominations for a non-agency chairperson. He stated in cases regarding such issues as the PNRC letter to Commission, it would be beneficial to have the signature of a non-agency chairperson on the document. No nominations were made.<sup>1</sup> Craig will continue to facilitate meetings.

<sup>1</sup>Later during the meeting Jackie Begay graciously volunteered to be the PNRC Chairperson.

**Agenda: 1. Funding Opportunities through Landowner Relations Program (LRP) – Wade Zarlingo**

Craig introduced Wade Zarlingo. Wade is the AGFD Landowner Relations Coordinator. Wade has been with the department for twelve years, the last seven within the hatchery system. Landowner Relations Program has two primary objectives: work with private landowners and land management agencies to enhance wildlife habitat and to protect and acquire access to public and state trust land. Some of the funding programs available are as follows:

*IIPAM* funding can be used on both private and public land to improved habitat for species at risk. There is \$80,000 available annually for this fund.

*Big Game Stewardship* can be used on private, state or federal land. There is approximately \$ 40,000 available annually.

*Access monies* can be used to obtain access to lands with contractual agreement of improvements with the landowner. Such improvements may include grasslands, installations of drinkers, and fences. This funding costs about \$500,000 a year.

*Open Space Program* is administered by the Arizona Department of Agriculture. Two million dollars annually have been designated for this program.

Other programs include *ECIP (Environmental Control Incentive Program)* and *WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program)*. All federal programs require a non-federal match percentage in monies.

*Landowner Incentive Program* is administered by the AGFD and is to support species at risk and must be used on private lands.

Great information on different funding programs! Thanks Wade!

**Agenda: 2. Forage Utilization Monitoring – Holt/Appel**

Craig explained that the monitoring is used as a tool used to see how much forage elk are utilizing. The forage is usually monitored in the spring and the fall. The forage has been monitored since 1999. Spreadsheets were available for Units 22 and 23. In Unit 22, early monitoring of 10 sites were in the light category for elk utilization of 30% or less, with the exception of Bonita Creek. Bonita Creek has orchard grass, which ends up in moderate to heavy utilization. In fall of 2004, readings were light as well. In Unit 23, early monitoring was light use. Late monitoring showed light use at all sites except for Thirteen Ranch, which was moderate.

**Agenda: 3. Winter Wildlife Surveys – Sector 9**

Elk survey data was handed out during December 15, 2004 meeting. Deer surveys are presented in the following tables.

#### REGION VI 2004-2005 MULE DEER SURVEY

UNIT	BUCKS	DOES	FAWNS	GROUPS	BUCK RATIO	FAWN RATIO
20B	17	43	15	28	40	35
21	09	34	14	26	26	41
22	52	138	61	38	38	44
23	22	107	45	35	21	42
24A	25	121	48	36	21	40
24B	20	87	62	49	23	71
ALL	145	530	245	228	28	46

#### REGION VI 2004-2005 WHITE-TAILED DEER SURVEY

UNIT	BUCKS	DOES	FAWNS	GROUPS	BUCK RATIO	FAWN RATIO
21	09	39	18	33	23	46
22	29	93	11	67	31	12
23	36	66	31	56	55	47
24A	19	103	43	72	18	42
24B	28	78	28	60	36	36
ALL	145	379	131	288	33	37

Craig McMullen reported this was the second year for using the block double count method of surveying by helicopter in Unit 23. He also reported that the five-year average for whitetail fawns in Unit 23 was 24:100. There is also a new hunt proposal to include an October whitetail hunt in this unit.

This is the highest mule deer fawn: doe ratio for Unit 23 since 1999, possibly because of the increased precipitation and the increased acorn production of 2003.

For Unit 24 mule deer hunter's success rate was 40%, and more than 50% of the harvest was spikes.

#### **Unit 22 Turkey:**

Ratio of 1.6 toms: per hen/ 2.4 polts: per hen/ and observed 25 turkeys.

Henry Apfel said in the 2004 fall hunt 75 permits were available, but hunter participation was only 69% with five birds harvested and a hunter success rate of 10%. During the spring hunt 125 permits were available with 75 % hunter participation and 31 birds harvested with a 33% success rate.

#### **Unit 23 Turkey:**

Ratio of 2.4 polts: per hen/ and observed 131 turkeys.

Tim said the five-year hunt success rate is 18%.

**Agenda 4: PNRC letter to Commission re bull ratio – Hanna/ all**

Craig McMullen reviewed the action of the last meeting in which a motion carried to write a letter to the commission to represent PNRC in regards to the bull: cow ratio proposal to decrease to 50 bulls per 100 cows from the present 60 bull: 100 cow ratio.

At the December 15, 2004 meeting the participants voted on a motion to draft a letter regarding this issue, with 16 of 25 in favor of the letter. It was decided that Dick Henry would draft the letter, email it to Jon Hanna for editing, and then present the letter to participants at this meeting for revision and approval. Craig McMullen stated that the letter should represent the opinion of the majority of the participants and those in agreement, should sign the letter.

Editor's note: From this point forward Sherry was unable to hear any further discussion on the tape because the tape player was not picking up the voices loud enough to be transcribed. Comments from this point forward are from my notes. Jon Hanna

- The PNRC letter for the Commission was finalized during this meeting by using a screen projection to edit the letter using input from members in attendance. After comments were implemented the letter was "signed" by ten of the members attending the meeting. Jon Hanna sent this letter (attached) to Game Branch to submit to the Commission as a public comment from the PNRC.
- The final review for project proposals were listed and briefly discussed. Twenty proposals were submitted this year for funding (attached).
- The final draft for updates to the Region VI Elk Operational plan were briefly discussed. The Operational Plan will be updated for review during the March 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting and the wording for the bull ratio objective will be changed from 60 to 50 per Commission direction (attached).
- Pete Hold announced that the Mogollon Sporting Association would be having their annual banquet on May 1<sup>st</sup>.
- Jackie Begay announced that a field trip open to the public would be conducted on April 7<sup>th</sup> to view and discuss their domestic sheep operation on the forest.
- Results from the elk teeth aging were made available during this meeting. Data from this analysis indicate an average age for harvested elk as 7.2 years old. Average age data by unit is 7.1 for Unit 22 and 7.3 for Unit 23. The average age was 6 years old for the early bull hunts in 1997 and 7.6 in 2000.

The next meeting will be March 23, 2005 at 6:00 PM in the Payson Police Conference Room. The agenda will include proposed 2005 hunt permits for elk in units 22 and 23, updates to the Elk Operational Plan, and upcoming events.